

Message Text

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21

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R 172106Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8626

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMULA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 2858

E.O. 1BTWC GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, ES, PGOV

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT MOLINA'S VIEWS OF RELATIONS WITH HONDURAS

(PART 3 OF 3)

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

SAN JOSE ALSO FOR USDEL SAN JOSE CONFERENCE

1. IN HIS MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR (DESCRIBED IN PART 1, SAN SALVADOR 2851), PRESIDENT MOLINA GAVE THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS VIS A VIS HONDURAS:

2. GOING BACK TO THE RESULTS OF THE JALAPA MEETING, PRESIDENT MOLINA SAID THAT HE AND FORMER HONDURAN CHIEF OF STATE LOPEZ ARRELLANO HAD AGREED THEY WOULD GET TOGETHER WITHIN A FEW DAYS TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS GSHAPE REESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. INSTEAD, LOPEZ CALLED AND POSTPONED THE MEETING UNTIL AFTER EASTER. ON THE DAY HE WAS SUPPOSED TO CALL BACK TO FIX A DATE, LOPEZ WAS REMOVED AS COMMANDER OF THE HONDURAN ARMY. MOLINA SAID THAT WHEN HE LATER HEARD THE NEWS OF LOPEZ' OUSTER AS COS HE PLACED A CALL TO HIM TO EXPRESS HIS CONDOLENCES AND CONTINUED FRIENDSHIP. MOLINA SAID HE OFFERED THE FALLEN COS ASYLUM IN ELNDALVADOR, BUT THAT THE OFFER WAS DECLINED WITH
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THANKS. LOPEZ PROMISED TO PASS ON TO HIS SUCCESSOR (MELGAR)

MOLINA'S EXPRESSION OF THE GOES' CONTINUED GOOD WILL.

3. IN THE MONTHS OF CONFUSION THAT FOLLOWED IN HONDURAS, MOLINA SAID THAT HE TRIED NOT TO GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION. HE SAID THAT DURING THOSE FIRST MONTHS PRESIDENT ODUBER OF COSTA RICA PRESSED HARD TO HOLD ANOTHER REGIONAL SUMMIT MEETING. IT WAS DURING THIS PERIOD THAT GUATEMALAN PRESIDENT LAUGERUD OFFERED TO ACT AS A GO-BETWEEN TO ESTABLISH DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN MOLINA AND MELGAR. HE ALSO OFFERED A SITE WHERE MOLINA AND MELGAR COULD MEET PRIVATELY SHOULD THEY WANT TO.

4. AFTER CONSIDERABLE MANEUVERING, THE FIVE COUNTRIES AGREED TO MEET IN COSTA RICA ON JULY 10. MOLINA SAID THAT HE AND LAUGERUD CONVINCED MELGAR OF THE USEFULNESS OF A GOES-GOH SUMMIT BEFORE THE LARGER MEETING. THE FIRST PLAN WAS TO HOLD THE BILATERAL MEETING IN GUATEMALA, BUT MELGAR'S DOMESTIC PROBLEMS DICTATED AGAINST HIS LEAVING THE COUNTRY. THE MEETING AT EL POY ON JULY 7, ULTIMATELY ARRANGED BY THE TWO DEFENSE MINISTERS, WAS THE RESULT. ITS PURPOSE WAS FOR THE TWO PRESIDENTS TO GET ACQUAINTED. THE ONLY CONCRETE ACHIEVEMENT WAS THAT BOTH SIDES AGREED ON THE NECESSITY TO AVOID FURTHER INCIDENTS ON THE BORDER. AN AGREEMENT WAS MADE THAT THE LOCAL MILITARY COMMANDERS WILL TRY TO RESOLVE ANY DISPUTE. IF LOCAL RESOLUTION IS NOT POSSIBLE, THE MATTER WILL BE REFERRED FIRST TO THE CHIEFS OF STAFF, AND THEN TO DEFENSE MINISTERS OR PRESIDENTS, IF NECESSARY. MOLINA SAID THAT HE AND MELGAR GAVE EACH OTHER FRANK ASSESSMENTS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRY'S DOMESTIC PROBLEMS IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT OF THEIR BILATERAL DISPUTE. HE SAID HE LEFT EL POY WITH A FAVORABLE IMPRESSION OF HIS COLLEAGUE'S SINCERITY AND HONESTY.

5. AN UNDERSTANDING WAS ALSO REACHED AT EL POY THAT THE TWO FOREIGN MINISTERS WOULD "UNDERTAKE A SLOW AND CAREFUL PROCESS" TO RESOLVE THE BOUNDARY DISPUTE. THE DEFENSE MINISTERS WILL ALSO CONTINUE THEIR CONTACTS. BOTH PRESIDENTS AGREED THAT THE PROBLEM WAS A BILATERAL ONE AND SHOULD NOT BE ON THE AGENDA OF THE COSTA RICAN COS MEETING. HE CLAIMED THAT BOTH ALSO AGREED THEY WOULD REFRAIN FROM RECOURSE TO THE OAS OR UN WHILE THEY SEEK A BILATERAL SOLUTION.

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6. COMMENT - IT WAS OBVIOUS FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESCRIPTION THAT NEITHER HE NOR HIS HONDURAN COUNTERPART FEELS THERE IS A MAGIC SOLUTION TO THE BILATERAL PROBLEM. BOTH REALIZE THAT NORMALIZATION, WHEN IT COMES, WILL BE A GRADUAL PROCESS. IT WAS ALSO CLEAR THAT MOLINA BELIEVES THAT HE AND MELGAR HAVE DEMONSTRATED GOOD WILL AND UNDERSTANDING OF EACH OTHER'S PROBLEMS, AN ESSENTIAL BASE ON WHICH TO BUILD FUTURE AGREEMENTS.

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